

Topic	Love Beneath the Waves
Reference	Jonah 1:4-17
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Speaker	Pastor Massimo Gei

Bitterness

We all have gone through seasons of bitterness in our lives and there are many different reasons of why we become bitter, we might be in our workplaces and there is just somebody who just keeps on doing better than us and every time we look at that person we get bitter or every time we do something and there is this other person who comes and outshines us or maybe there is somebody who every time we put on work claims our work for himself and we get bitter with that person. Maybe somebody has hurt us, maybe somebody has sinned against us and we are bitter with them. There are so many reasons why we get bitter. We might just be bitter here because somebody in our home didn't carry out the trash this morning. There are so many reasons why we get bitter and all of us have experienced different facets of bitterness, even Jonah was bitter. We heard last week that how Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh and preach forgiveness. The reason is because he was bitter with the Assyrians, as they were evil wicked people who had evil practices. Their major enemy was Israelites. So Jonah had every reason to be bitter with them, but he was not just bitter with the Assyrians, he was not just bitter with Nineveh. He was bitter with God, because God put him into a lose-lose situation.

If he goes to Nineveh and he preaches repentance and nobody repents he might get killed (loss) and if he goes to Nineveh and they repent then they will receive God's wrath that is loss as well. He is bitter with God because God put him into a lose-lose situation. So he does what everyone of us does when we are bitter. He avoids the people. He went to great length and great distances just to avoid the people of Nineveh. He was in Joppa, he was supposed to go to Nineveh which was 550 miles but he went to Tarshish which was 2500 miles in the opposite direction. He is trying to do everything to go the opposite direction. Aren't we the same thing when we are bitter with people, we try to avoid them. They walk on this side we cross the road. They are sitting on this table, we are sitting on another table and we let this affect our relationships.

So our bitterness and our avoidance affect our relationship with other people. In Jonah's case it affected his relationship with God because he was bitter with Nineveh it affected his relationship, he was bitter with God, he is trying to run from the presence of God. In Hebrew it says, he tries to run away from the face of God. He is trying to escape the face of God. We sometime let our bitterness affect our relationship with God too, sometimes we stop going to church because we are bitter with certain people in church and we avoid. Now there are different ways of avoiding people. Some of us are like the people who go to different places, we try to stay away from

people, some of us avoid eye contact, and some of us avoid conversation, so we are like the silent bitter person in our home.

We go to great distances and great lengths just to make the people suffer who we are bitter with. I was so bitter when I got divorced and I tried everything so that my wife suffers. We do crazy things when we are bitter with people. It just shows our heart become when we get bitter. Jonah was bitter and this brought him down.

This bitterness also let me down to a drug addiction, it eventually let me to lose my money and all my wealth and I went all the way down. It is the same bitterness and I became tired. And because I was tired I was blaming the whole world, I was blaming her, it was definitely her fault and that is what we do when we are bitter we blame everybody and we must realize one thing. The people who have heard us might be the occasion of our bitterness; they are not the cause of our bitterness. **Our unforgiveness is the cause of our bitterness.** Jonah was bitter because he did not want to go in and preach forgiveness to Nineveh; it was his unforgiveness that caused this bitterness. Jonah too was tired and he went all the way down to the belly of the boat and he slept, it says he went into a deep-deep sleep, even the storms couldn't make him, somebody have to come and wake him up.

There are strange things right about the storms in our lives. What the storms in our lives do, what did storm did for the sailors and what the storm did for Jonah it reveals the condition of our heart. The storm revealed the condition of the heart of the sailors and it revealed the condition of the heart of Jonah.

Heart Condition of Sailors:

The storm was coming and the sailors tried everything possible to just get out of the storm. They are kind of like us, hard times come we try everything what we can do and it is only when everything else that we know what to do does not work out then we start praying and that is what TheY did. They started praying to their Gods, started worshipping their God and when that didn't work out they said there is one guy who hasn't been worshipping his God, may be its this guy's God that is in-charge of this. So they went down to the boat, they woke up Jonah and told him to pray to his God. Jonah said, I cannot pray I am avoiding God.

Jonah arise go to Nineveh and here we see **Jonah arise, pray to your God.** Jonah does not want to pray to God, he is avoiding God right now.

The cast lots and the next thing happen is that it falls on Jonah again and he is kind of pushed against the corner and when he is pushed against the corner, he finally admits I am the one I am guilty, I am running from God and all these things are coming onto you and what happens is they did investigation. All they care about is getting out of the storm. They are not interested to come into relationship with God, they are not trying to find out who God is, all they want to do is to find out who can they pray to, what can they do to get out of the storm and then Jonah tells

them. Throw me out of boat. They thought it sounds crazy, so they tried to do whatever they can to save the boat but when that fails then they were only willing to do the radicle thing and that just shows their condition of their heart. They are not here to worship, they are not here to repent, all they want is to get out of trouble, they want to get out of their storm. Yes eventually they obeyed and eventually they threw Jonah over water but why did they do it, that way they can get out of storm. Sometimes we have obedience in our life that seem like repentance but all we want to do is just get out of the trouble. There is no real desire to seek relationship with God. There is no real desire to do real worship, all we are interested in is self-perseverance. What can we do to get out of the storm?

We are hoping that may be Jonah's heart is different, may be Jonah response differently to the storm and it seems that he is doing repentance too, it seems that he is doing something good there. He finally owns up, I am at fault, but he did this when he is pushed against the corner. When he got no choice, when you have been found out about and then he hold up, but at least he does. Some of us even when we are pushed against the corner we like it is not my fault. He is against the corner and he owns up, yes it is my fault and it is because of me that you guys are suffering too.

Our sins and our disobedience affect others. It affect other people as well and we got to own up to that. So we must know one thing that the most loving, the most gracious thing that we can do for our family, for our friends, for our community is walk in obedience with God. That is the most loving thing we can do. Be faithful to God and walk in obedience with God because our sins will affect others. So he is there, he is owning up but it is just surface repentance. Because we see in Chapter 3 later on he read he is still bitter. Yes he does the action, he does the preaching, he does what he needs to do later on but he is still bitter. Surface repentance is a good illustration, you think of a shark in the water. We have this sin and it is like a shark. What we do is we always repent of the fin, the surface problem the thing that we can see, but inside we have this shark that nobody can see. That is ready to devour anytime and you have no idea when he is going to bite, the symptoms are not there anymore because you haven't got down to the heart issue of the problem.

Real repentance gets down to the heart issue. Here is a little chart on how we can own and disown our sins. These are taken from City to City Network.

Own & Disown Your Sin



Jonah owned his sin, he said I am at fault; it is because of me that other people are suffering too. He didn't go to step two to seek deep in his heart.

Our heart issue is we think that our self-worth is derived from what people think and say about us, not what God thinks and says about me. Once you figure out your heart issue, you repent of the heart issues, what other people say about us is so important that is where I get my self-worth from, Lord help me get my worth from you, you are my creator, you are my maker, you are everything that matters and you say that I am your son that I am loved and that I am chosen, Lord help me. That is confessing of the heart issue and then what we do is we disown our sins. What has Jesus done for us? Jesus has adopted me, he has paid the price for me. Now I am son of God, so he has given me worth. And then we ask the spirit, spirit help me next time, next time when somebody insults me, when somebody is evil towards me help me not to retaliate, help me find my self-worth in you and ask the spirit to guide me in this.

Downward Repentance

Sight

How might I take a closer look at my heart and this sin?

Confession

How can I honestly and specifically confess this to Jesus?

Godly Sorrow

How has this sin damaged me, my family & my community?

Godly Shame

How has this sin tarnished the name and glory of Jesus?

Hatred & Turn

How is this sin my enemy, seeking my ruin?



Another way of looking at repentance is downward repentance because lot of times our repentance are habitual habits and how do we get rid of them and here it just says,

Sight, take a close look at my heart. Always look at the heart issue. How can I honestly and specifically confess this to Jesus? How has that sinned damaged me, my family and my community, because sin always damages me, my family and my community and we need to vocalize their, we need to think on that. It is best we do that in community, so people can hold us accountable to our actions and then here. Godly shame, sin tarnished the name and glory of Jesus. Hatred and turn, sin seeking my ruin.

If we take this, if we do this regularly we are going to start hating that sin. If we start vocalizing and thinking through these things we are going to start hating the sin and we would be able to may be change but what was the heart issue with Jonah.

He says, it was me I was fleeing from God and that is the problem. That is not the problem. The problem was bitterness. The problem is that he thought that Nineveh was undeserving and unworthy and did not deserve forgiveness.

When we think that certain people are not worthy of forgiveness, it means that you think that you are worthy. That is the problem entitlement. Jonah thought he was great, Jonah thought he was good, he was like a famous preacher, and he was like the Tim Keller of the day. He thought as he was a Jew that he deserved forgiveness, because of his ethnic background and people of other ethnic background don't deserve forgiveness. He thought he was entitled but he should have realized instead nobody is entitled that is why it is called grace (unmerited favor, undeserving favor).

We think that we must be good person because we don't hate people. The opposite of love is not hate, it is apathy. The opposite of love is indifference, it is not caring. When we ignore people we are actually not loving them.

We are like the sailors with what we all are doing is to get out of the storm.

Grace is the only thing that can break our heart. It is God's grace that changes everything and that is the story of Jonah, while we are running, God is pursuing. See that is the good news that while Jonah was there, not really repenting, just doing surface repentance God was pursuing him and had a plan to save him. While the sailors were around just trying to do self-perseverance God has a plan to even save the sailors and while Nineveh was wicked God has a plan to save Nineveh that is the good news that while we were yet sinners God showed his love that he sent his son to die for us, while we are yet sinners, while we are unrepentant, while we are running, while we are wicked.

Jesus said he is just like Jonah. Jonah went overboard to calm the storm and then went down, was swallowed by fish and he stayed down under for three days and then he rose again to a living Jesus. Jesus was thrown into the storm of God's wrath on the cross for us, he stayed under the earth for three days then he rose again. The only difference is Jonah did it involuntary, Jonah did it because of his own disobedience, but Jesus came and pursued us because of our disobedience. Jonah ran away from the enemy, Jesus ran towards the enemy. Jonah was about revenge; Jesus was about restoration and rescue. It is because of Jesus finished work on the cross and his resurrection that wrath of God's storm is no longer for us. Jesus took it upon himself. So now we know that whatever storm comes in our lives is not a storm to pay us back for our sin, no, it is to bring us back from our sin. The storms come not for retribution but for restoration. It is because of Christ love and because of his work on the cross and because of God's grace and mercy, because of his goodness that we can be like Nineveh and we can repent that we can be like the sailors and give sacrifices and vows to God that we may be like Jonah, we are work in progress but still used for God's mission.